

## **Stupid with Love** by **Kamije Celeek**

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**Summary:** El Hopper was smart with math but stupid with love. Then she met Mike Wheeler in her calculus class and suddenly that changed.

## Stupid with Love

*How did I get here?*

That was the thought running through El's head as she curled up against her boyfriend. He pulled her closer, mumbling sleepily to himself, and she giggled.

"Love you," he whispered, opening one eye. She kissed his jawline.

"I love you, too."

She settled into his embrace, his skin warm against hers.

*If they could see us now...*

They weren't a normal couple by any stretch of the imagination. It was a real *Romeo & Juliet* situation, where they were forbidden to be together by circumstances beyond their control. Not by their families, but by the social structure that made up their school. And that same social structure made her hide parts of herself to keep the friends she'd made and forced them both to hide their relationship from everyone but their closest friends for fear of the backlash that would come from the student body as a whole. Nobody expected them to ever get together, but it happened, and it would completely disrupt the social hierarchy.

Jane Eleanor Hopper, popular cheerleader. Pretty, athletic, and sweet. Kind of short, at 5'2" (okay, really freaking short) with the kind of beauty that caught people's attention because she didn't call attention to herself. Daughter of the Chief of Police. Friends with Stacey Burns and Jennifer Hayes. The kind of girl that nobody really expected to make it far because she would rather shop and have fun than get good grades and go to college. But she was smart, too; her grades were actually some of the highest in their class, outstripped only by the four boys who made up the top tier of the nerds, including her boyfriend.

Oh, yeah, him.

Michael Theodore Wheeler, unpopular nerd. President of Hawkins A/V and a skilled Dungeon Master. Quite possibly the smartest person in the Hawkins High junior class. Tall, at 6'3", with dark hair that always seemed to be in his eyes and freckles dotting his skin. He was unconventionally attractive. Son of the recently-divorced and well-to-do Wheelers. Friends with the rest of the A/V Club and Max Mayfield. The kind of guy that everyone knew would be going off to MIT or something and would become a big-time computer expert or something like that. Even though he actually wanted to be a writer and had the biggest heart of anybody his girlfriend had ever met. No way he'd go to MIT when everything he wanted was in Hawkins right now.

But how did this odd couple come together?

It all started with calculus and Mrs. Dimerco.

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Eleanor stumbled over her feet as she rushed to make it to class on time. It was the first day of junior year, and her first upper-level math class, so she couldn't afford to be late. Hopefully, Mrs. Dimerco would be understanding towards her, but she doubted it. She managed to make it inside right before the bell rang and found her name on the seating chart. Towards the back, behind somebody named Michael W. She could deal with that.

Until she actually sat down and saw who was in front of her.

He was tall. Like, *stupidly* tall. And completely blocking her view of the board, too. She sighed; after she had stopped growing upwards, she'd accepted that she would likely be unable to see past most of her taller classmates. But this was ridiculous. Math was her favorite subject and she needed to be able to see and... *was this guy six feet tall?!*

"Excuse me," she whispered, tapping his shoulder. "Would you mind moving so I can see the board?"

The guy turned to face her and she felt her breathing hitch ever so slightly. Dark hair that hung in his eyes, high cheekbones, freckles that made her want to map out constellations on his face... he was

undeniably cute and she felt her cheeks heating up.

"Oh, sorry," he apologized, moving slightly so she could see the board before turning back around.

*No, I wanna look at your face now...*

She just couldn't *win*, could she? Sighing, she took out her notebook and prepared to write down the first formulas they'd begin learning.

"Here." She looked up to see Michael handing her a syllabus.

"Thanks." He smiled back at her and she felt her knees getting weak.

*God, you're cute. Stupidly cute and stupidly tall...*

"Hopper, Jane?" called Mrs. Dimerco.

"Here! And I'd prefer Eleanor, if you don't mind."

"Right." Eleanor deflated; she hated both her names but she didn't have any other alternative. Eleanor was the lesser of the two evils.

As the class continued, she found her gaze wandering from the board to Michael (or Mike, as he preferred). He was taking diligent notes and paying attention, while her eyes stayed on him. She couldn't help it; he was captivating and more interesting than the math on the board. Which was saying something considering she'd sworn off crushes and love at the age of thirteen when she decided to become a psychologist. Math was the only love she needed. It was consistent and easier to understand than the inner workings of the heart.

*Smart with math but stupid with love*, Kat used to say before she went off to college.

*You'll find somebody, Ellie-Belle*, Sarah had said in response.

Her sisters. The only people who understood her distaste for romance, even if they didn't agree with it. No, let the older and younger Hopper sisters go into the world of love and dating. Eleanor had no desire to engage in any of it.

But now...

Mike made her heart do flips when he smiled. She wanted to trace her fingers over his freckles and find patterns in them before she kissed him. She wanted him to kiss her back, like they did in the movies. She wanted to stand on tiptoe to even get close to his face while they were in the cafeteria because he was so much taller than she was. She wanted him to pin her against the wall and run his hands down her body while he kissed her neck—

*Whoa. Slow down, Eleanor.*

She hadn't ever had thoughts like that before. Not about anybody. And maybe it was just because he was a different kind of attractive than she was used to from guys. The kind of attractive that only a certain breed of person could appreciate and want. It made her nervous and she just wanted to make those thoughts go away so she could enjoy calculus in peace. But at the same time, she wanted to make those thoughts more intense and before she knew it, the class was over and Mike was gone.

She hadn't heard a damn word of the lecture.

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For the rest of the week, she sat behind him in calculus, trying to focus on taking notes but being continually distracted by little things she noticed about him. Like the way he shook his head to get his hair out of his eyes, and how he always knew the answer to whatever equation was on the board that Eleanor hadn't caught because she was too busy watching him.

Then her first test grade came back in early October.

52.

Out of a hundred.

She was failing math. Her favorite and best subject and she was *failing* because she couldn't keep her damn eyes on the board. She groaned as she banged her head on the desk and hoped that it was all a horrible nightmare. Not Mike, of course, but the bad grade and the

inability to focus.

"Hey, are you okay?"

Mike had heard her distress.

"I-I'm fine." His eyes landed on the quiz in her hand and she swept it into her bag, but he'd seen the grade. "Okay, I failed the first test. *God*, this sucks!"

"You not into math?" She shook her head.

"No, I *love* math! It's my favorite subject! I'm just... having trouble taking notes because I can't focus."

"Well, if it's notes you need, I've been told I take pretty good ones. Maybe I can tutor you."

*Me and Mike. Alone. Somewhere. Working on math. Yes please.*

*Get it together, Eleanor!*

"Yeah, that would be great. Thanks! When do you want to meet up?"

"How about after school? I can drive you to my house and then drive you home after."

"Sounds good."

*Get it together. Get it together.*

"You don't have practice?"

"Not on Tuesdays. Meet me in the parking lot?"

"You got it. See you then."

---

Mike couldn't believe this was happening.

On the first day of class, when Eleanor Hopper had run in almost late, he'd been shocked when she sat down behind him. He knew her as the least-bitchy member of the cheer squad, the one who didn't look

down on anybody... mostly because she was physically unable to. She was also known for being the shortest member of the squad.

When she tapped him on the shoulder and asked him to move, he'd felt like an asshole for being so fucking tall. He had at *least* a foot on her and that wasn't fair; she couldn't see the board over him in any way, shape, or form. But she had only asked him to move a little, her cheeks lightly dusted with pink, and he'd obliged. It was the first time he'd really seen her face in the two years she'd lived in Hawkins and she was the prettiest girl he'd ever seen in his damn life.

And so for a month, while he focused on taking notes and tried to ignore the fact that he was sitting in front of a girl he was starting to have a crush on, he also listened in the halls when her name was mentioned. She didn't appear to have any friends outside of the squad from what he could tell, and despite Troy's best (read: stalkerish and leering) efforts, she didn't have a boyfriend. She had no interest in romance from what he could gather, which made his heart slam downward.

Then, they'd gotten their first test grades back.

He'd gotten a 98, a couple points taken off for a mistake he'd made while working out a problem. Pretty standard, nothing big. It didn't bother him.

Then Eleanor had groaned behind him and there was a *thud*.

Turning around, he saw that she had her head on her desk and her test in her hand. The grade caught his eye and he cringed in sympathy.

52.

"Hey, are you okay?" he asked and she looked up at him.

"I-I'm fine." She seemed to notice him looking at her test and whipped it into her backpack. "Okay, I failed the first test. *God*, this sucks!"

"You not like math?" To his complete bewilderment, she shook her head.

"No, I *love* math! It's my favorite subject! I'm just... having trouble taking notes because I can't focus."

"Well, if it's notes you need, I've been told I take pretty good ones. Maybe I can tutor you." He was shocked at his own words and even more shocked when she seemed to be seriously considering his offer.

"Yeah, that would be great. Thanks. So, when do you want to meet up?"

And that had led to him offering to tutor her at his house, and her accepting, and Mike's heartrate going into overdrive. Because there was no fucking way any cheerleader would be caught *dead* at the A/V club president's house. It must've been a prank, set up by the others. Maybe her *real* grade was much higher and Stacey would pull some shit on him when he went out to his car. That must've been it, there was no other logical explanation.

But Eleanor Hopper defied logical explanations.

Because when Mike went out to the parking lot, she was waiting for him. Brown curls held back by a pink headband, pink sweater, and a black skirt that went down to her knees. A much more conservative outfit than what her fellow cheerleaders tended to wear, which was skintight sweaters and miniskirts. Eleanor's beauty was more understated, more... quietly alluring. And it made him fall for her that much harder.

He led her to his car and she got into the passenger seat, smiling gently as he started it up and backed out of his parking spot.

The drive to his house was quiet, since neither of them seemed to have much to say. His mom wasn't home, which meant his younger sister wasn't, either. He wouldn't have to explain who El was to them.

*Good. Because I honestly don't know.*

It was the first of several tutoring sessions, and he began to understand that El (Eleanor didn't fit her) wasn't just beautiful and sweet—she was smart as hell. She picked up on stuff faster than he expected and was able to keep up with him when his brain decided to



overexplain the math. And they started doing less math during those sessions and more talking, helping to ease the awkwardness that followed them wherever they went. Which was mostly to his house or hers, where he'd be accosted by her eight-year-old sister, Sarah. It wasn't anything other than that, or so he thought.

Then, the day before Halloween...

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"Here."

He looked up as she handed him an invitation.

"What's this?" he asked.

"It's an invite for Jenny's Halloween party. You're invited."

"Seriously?"

"I asked her for an extra. It's the least I can do for all the help you've been giving me. I'm passing because of you."

"Parties aren't really my thing..."

"Oh. Sorry." She looked apologetic. "I thought... I thought we could hang out. I don't like parties, either, but Jenny's my best friend and I can't *not* go."

*Fucking hell, you're adorable.*

"And your friends can come, if they want. It's a costume party. See you there?"

"Y-yeah. I'll try to make it."

"Great!" Her face lit up with that smile again and he tucked the invitation into his backpack.

Jennifer Hayes's parties were legendary at Hawkins High. They were invite-and-plus only, meaning you either had to have an invitation or you were there with somebody who had an invitation. But she mostly invited jocks and cheerleaders and stoners and anybody else who was

considered 'cool'. Mike and his friends, the Party, had never been on that list. Now, thanks to El, they were. She'd handed him something that Dustin had been after since freshman year and he didn't know how to deal with it.

After El turned away, he tucked it into his notebook. He'd decide whether or not to accept later.

Then at lunch, he forgot about the invitation as Dustin asked to see his calculus notes to make sure that he was prepared for the test coming up after Halloween. Mike handed it over and Dustin opened it up... only for the invitation to fall onto his lap.

"Dude, what the *fuck*?!"

"Shit."

"Where did you get this?!" He held it up for Will, Dustin, and Max to see and Lucas snatched it from him.

"Mike, *you* got an invitation to Jennifer's Halloween party?!" Lucas gasped.

"Shut up. I haven't decided if I'm going yet."

"Uh, you're going," Dustin snorted. "You got invited to a *Jennifer Hayes* party. Which means you can get us in, too. How the hell did you even get it?"

"El." He said her nickname, so they all stared at him in confusion. "Eleanor Hopper. I've been tutoring her and she gave me the invite as a thank-you. No big—"

"*It is a HUGE deal!*" Dustin yelled. "Eleanor Hopper totally likes you!"

"She's a friend, if that." Mike waved it off. "She's just trying to be nice."

"But I agree with Dustin," Max piped up. "We're going, end of story."

"El also said it's a costume party, if that helps."

"Yes. No conspiracy this year." Dustin grinned. "I might have to kiss Eleanor if you won't."

"She's not into romance, so good luck with that."

"Still, she's not a bitch. That counts for something. Anyway, how long have you been tutoring her?"

"Since we got our first tests back. She has trouble seeing the board and focusing, so I've been helping her with notes."

"Why, does she sit behind you or something? Wait, no wonder she has trouble seeing the board. You're like the tallest person in our grade."

"Shut up, Dustin."

Will shook his head sympathetically.

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"Eleanor, you *seriously* invited Wheeler?"

Stacey wasn't hiding the disgust in her tone.

"He's the reason I'm passing calculus right now. It was the least I could do to be nice."

"As long as his little friends don't try to flirt with me. Or any of us. I won't have a problem then."

El felt a strange sense of relief as she slid on her costume. She was going to be dressed as Persephone, the Greek Queen of the Underworld. A crown of daisies and other small flowers rested at the top of her brown curls and with some woven into her hair. Her dress was dark purple and hung loosely on her frame, like the fashion of ancient Greece was meant to do.

"I'm going to go find Troy. Maybe you'll finally let him kiss you."

"I would rather kiss Ganon."

"I don't know who the fuck that is."

"Legend of Zelda. The pig guy who's the bad guy of the whole game?"

"Oh, shit. Yeah."

Over the summer, El had played through the entire game with Stacey and Jenny at her side at the insistence of her older sister, Kat. It had been fun, but Stacey had opted out of any future sessions. Thankfully, Jenny had fun and picked up on the habit with El so that now it was a regular thing. They'd even gone to the arcade a couple times, where they discovered somebody named MADMAX who was the king/queen of Dig Dug. Neither of them had even come close to making the leaderboard.

"Bye." Stacey headed downstairs and El sighed as Jenny sat down next to her.

"Are you okay, Ellie?"

"I'm... I'm in a weird spot right now. Remember my whole thing about dating and romance?"

"Where you told yourself you would never fall in love and for all intents and purposes became a math nun? Yeah."

"Because I don't understand it. *Stupid with love*, that's what Kat used to say about me. And now... you can't tell Stacey. Promise?"

"I promise. Mostly because I think this has to do with why you needed Mike Wheeler to tutor you and I'm not touching that topic with Stacey."

"Okay, so on the first day, I had to sit behind him, and he's stupidly tall. I asked him to move a little so I could see the board and then I saw his face with the cheekbones and the million little freckles and I just wanted to look at him forever. But it started to be me wanting to kiss him and wanting him to kiss me and I couldn't focus in class and when I got that bad test grade back, he offered to help tutor me. And my mind was like, 'alone with him? Yes please'. So he's been tutoring me and it's only gotten worse. I think I have a crush on him."

"Ellie!" Jenny threw her arms around her best friend. "You're falling in love!"

"You're not upset that it's Mike Wheeler?"

"Honey. I used to have a crush on his friend, Will, back when we were in middle school. If I were upset with you, I'd be a hypocrite. And I'm proud of you for inviting him to this. Just promise me you'll make him wrap it up."

"Ew. Jenny."

"What? We don't need any Hopper-Wheeler babies running around."

"Please stop talking."

"I bet you his fingers are good, though, from all the work he does on video games and electronics."

"I'm leaving!" El stood up and headed for the door.

"What? You're leaving the life a math nun! We're just talking about you and Wheeler's *calculust*."

"Bye!"

---

Mike felt nervous as he and his group of friends approached Jennifer Hayes's house. The invitation was tucked into the vest of his Han Solo costume and he was freaking out about whether or not he and his friends would be let inside. He shouldn't have worried, though, because as soon as the invitation was seen by the guy at the door, they were let in. Almost as soon as they entered the house, Mike was accosted by the hostess herself, who dragged him into a side room.

"What's going on?" he asked.

"Listen, Wheeler," she said, her voice low. "Ellie invited you because she likes you. And that's weird for her, so don't make it weirder. Talk to her, but not about your mutual *calculust*."

"Excuse me?"

"Nothing." Jennifer waved it off. "Treat her right. Her dad's the chief of police and her older sister is trained in martial arts. Hurt her and

you'll be on the receiving end of treatment from one of them. It just depends on who's actually home."

Mike swallowed.

"Don't tell her I told you. But I know she wouldn't, so I had to. Go get her, tiger."

She shoved him into the main party and he found himself wandering. Troy and Stacey were making out and arguing at the same time and he rolled his eyes in response. He didn't understand how they could do shit like that. It was annoying and stupid.

Then he bumped into somebody and realized it was El.

She looked like a goddess—literally, a Greek goddess. Little flowers woven in her hair, a crown of them on her head... he thought she was adorable. Not to mention she wasn't wearing the type of skintight costumes most girls in their grade did, which for some reason made her miles above anyone else.

"You look beautiful," he blurted, then wanted to punch himself. She giggled. "God, guess the odds of me embarrassing myself are high tonight."

"Never tell me the odds," she replied and he froze.

*Did she just...?*

"Han Solo, right?"

"Right. You like Star Wars?"

"It's kind of a weird bonding thing my sisters and I have."

"All three of you?"

"Yep."

He noticed a guy walking up behind her with a cup and pulled her out of the way, just as the guy 'tripped' and spilled his drink all over the carpet instead of her. He glared and Mike glared back before the

guy ran off and El was giving Mike a grateful look.

Never in his damn life had he been more grateful for Nancy.

"Thanks for saving me."

"Eh. It was just a drink. My sister, Nancy—she told me that guys like to do that so they can see... never mind."

"Oh. Oh!" El's cheeks turned pink and she looked up at Mike.

"Damn, Wheeler," Max laughed, sidling up with Lucas at her side. "I didn't realize you were that smooth."

"Shut up, Max."

"So, when he's tutoring you, is it *just* math?" Max was completely ignoring the blushing and sputtering Mike.

"It's just math." El looked a little embarrassed, which Mike didn't miss and he tried to salvage the conversation.

"Hey, how about we talk about something else? Like, *anything else*?"

"Sure. How about the fact that you think she's—"

"El, you wanna go somewhere other than here?"

"I think I'll keep talking to your friends, if you don't mind."

"Okay. I'm going to get some punch."

---

Max grinned as Mike walked away with his face the same color as a strawberry. She'd actually known about his crush on the shortest cheerleader for a while, and she also knew for a fact that El felt the same way. Mostly because they forgot they were also in the same history class as Max and neither of them could keep their eyes off each other there. Then there was the simple fact that she'd heard the rumors that Eleanor Hopper (El was a much better name for her) did not date, and if Mike was enough to change her mind, well...

She'd deal with him dating a cheerleader.

"MadMax."

"What?" Max looked at El, who was staring at her.

"Max. MadMax." A grin broke across her face. "I can't believe it took me this long to figure it out."

"What are you talking about?"

"Top score in Dig Dug at the Palace Arcade—MadMax."

All four of the Party members there stared at her.

"You play video games?" Dustin whispered hoarsely.

"Not that often—I have practice. But Jenny and I go to the arcade sometimes to blow off steam when we've had a rough week."

"If Mike doesn't ask you out, I will."

El's face turned pink and as if he'd been summoned, Mike appeared beside her with a cup of punch.

"What are you guys telling her?"

"Nothing, but apparently she likes video games." Mike's eyebrows shot up and Max has to hold back a laugh at the lovestruck look on his face as he glances at El.

"You do?"

"So does Jenny. We're terrible, but it's fun."

"I say we all leave and go to the arcade," Will suggested. "It'll be more fun than this."

"I agree," El stated.

*Wheeler, you fucking found her. The mythical nerdy cheerleader, a walking contradiction.*



*Treat her right.*

---

As it turned out, Jenny's ex-boyfriend decided to show up as one of Troy's extras, so she was more than willing to step out with El and the Party (as they discovered Mike and his friends called themselves). Jenny herself was happy to escape the demands of being Jennifer Hayes, hot cheerleader and party hostess, to go out and be Jenny, a girl who liked the arcade and the crowd of nerds she was technically supposed to avoid at all costs. Not to mention that she privately thought Dustin Henderson was kind of cute.

*If Ellie can have a crush on Mike Wheeler, then I can have a crush on Dustin Henderson.*

The Palace wasn't too crowded, which made sense; most of its normal crowd was out trick-or-treating or partying. Keith, the creepy twenty-two-year-old manager who never hesitated to flirt with the two cheerleaders whenever they came in, balked at the sight of the seven who entered in Halloween costumes, ready to play video games.

"Since when do you lovely ladies hang with these losers?" he asked, crossing his arms.

"Since these losers got us out of a party we didn't want to be part of," El answered smoothly. Jenny giggled and they all converged at a table to pool what quarters they could.

Pretty soon, they were all watching Dustin, cheering him on as he once again tried to beat the game that was his age-old enemy: Dragon's Lair. Once again, he came close to rescuing Princess Daphne, but once again, his knight was toasted by the dragon and Lucas maintained his claim over the *fictional* girl.

"You guys are better than most of our friends," Jenny stated bluntly.

"Considering that group contains the human shit heap that is Troy Harrington, yes, we're an improvement," Dustin snorted.

It was then that they noticed Mike and El had gone off somewhere.

"How much do you want to bet they're making out somewhere?"

snickered Max.

"You see, that's their mutual *calculust* right there," Jenny explained, laughing.

"Oh my—Jennifer Hayes, you might just find a place in the Party yet."

---

Mike and El, as a matter of fact, were *not* making out but rather had gone off to talk to each other. They were outside, sitting on the benches that had been installed the previous year, and El suddenly felt very aware of their height difference. Whereas his feet were firmly planted on the ground, hers swung above the pavement.

"I was surprised that you like video games," Mike commented. "That didn't come up at all."

"It was because of my older sister, really. She bought an NES last summer and a bunch of games and demanded that I 'get back in touch with my nerdy side'. I ended up playing through the entirety of the Legend of Zelda by the time school started and me and Jenny just kind of... picked up on gaming."

"Your sister actually sounds really cool."

"She's what my dad calls a walking contradiction. Smart but doesn't get the best grades, cool but loves stuff like Star Wars and video games... not to mention there's her boyfriend who I still have yet to meet."

"Wow." Awkward silence filled the air between them and Mike coughed before glancing up at the sky.

"Clear view of the stars tonight," he stated.

"Yeah. Sarah loves space. If she were out here with us, she'd be naming every single constellation she could spot. And then telling us the stories of how each one got its name."

"She's pretty cute."

"In our family, Kat's the cool one, Sarah's the cute one, and I'm the weird one."

"Hey, just like mine." She was silent for a moment, then...

"Can I tell you something?"

"O-of course," he stammered.

"I really like your freckles."

*WHOA. Was not expecting that.*

"You do?"

"Mm-hmm. They remind me of stars."

Mike swore that if his heart was beating any faster, it would have jumped out of his chest.

"Sorry. Did I just make this more awkward? Oh, God..." She shook her head. *"Stupid with love..."*

"What does that mean?"

"It's what Kat says about me—that I'm smart with math but stupid with love because I understand one and not the other."

"I don't think *anybody* understands love. Like with impossible crushes that you know won't go anywhere so you just... sit there. And watch them, hoping they'll notice you watching but knowing they won't."

"Yeah. And you think maybe they're too intimidated to talk to you, so you decide to wallow in self-pity before telling your best friend everything and immediately regretting it."

"Or they're out of your league and too amazingly perfect."

"Or maybe it's an awkward difference in social standing... or height."

"Definitely the height."

"Yeah, *definitely* the height."

He smiled and pulled a tiny rosebud out of her hair before handing it to her.

"Is this less awkward?"

"Much less." She was quiet for a moment. "How tall are you, just out of curiosity? Like, exact height?"

"Six-three."

"Holy shit. I'm five-two."

"When we go back to school, we're switching seats in calculus."

"No, we're not."

"Why not?"

"Because then I can't look at your freckles." She pouted and he laughed.

"El, you need to be able to take notes. Having me in front of you isn't helping, even if I love tutoring you."

"Fine. We'll switch. But... you have to come with me to see *The Princess Bride* at the Hawk next week." He stared at her.

"D-did you just ask me out?"

"Was that too forward?" A blush spread across her cheeks. "Sorry, you don't *have* to..."

"No, I want to! I'd love to see a movie with you... even if it's something so completely cheesy."

"I read the book. It's romantic. And funny. And it makes fun of every fairy tale cliché you can think of."

"Okay, I'll give it a shot."

It was just them, outside the Palace, and Mike felt like they were the only people in the universe. A tug in his chest told him to kiss her. She was right there, all he had to do was put his lips to hers and he'd

have his first real kiss.

*Do it*, that little voice said. *She wants to date you. Get the ball rolling.*

And he had no problem giving into that little voice.

"El."

"What?" She turned and he tilted her chin up as he leaned down, his lips meeting hers.

The sparks between them were immediate and Mike didn't want to stop. El wrapped her arms around his neck and he pulled her close around her waist and it felt like *sacrilege* for Han Solo to be kissing Persephone instead of Leia but he didn't give a fuck. All that mattered was that nerdy Mike Wheeler was kissing cheerleader El Hopper and nobody was around to stop them.

Then somebody whistled.

Mike and El broke apart to see their friends—the Party and Jenny—watching them with interest. Well, the Party was interested. Jenny was a different story. She was looking from El to Mike with the face of a proud mother.

"Oh my God..." she whispered, smiling. "I was right. I was totally right."

"Jenny!" El squeaked, wrenching herself away from Mike's hold. "Don't—"

"You've broken your math nun vows. You're giving into calculust, one of the seven mathly sins."

"Okay, that wasn't funny the first time!" El's cheeks were bright pink and Mike's matched. "Jenny!"

"I'm teasing! We're all friends here, aren't we?"

"Hell *yeah* we are!" Max high-fived Jenny.

*Okay, today is officially weird. I'm dating El Hopper, we went to the*

*biggest Halloween party in town and skipped out to play video games with two cheerleaders, and now Max is apparently best friends with Jennifer Hayes.*

Wow.

And that was only the beginning of it all. Jenny and El were brought into the Party—Jenny because she and Max got along so well and El because she was dating Mike. And that last part was still so *hard* for Mike to believe. Even when she invited him over to her house the day before Thanksgiving, he still couldn't believe that the prettiest girl at Hawkins High wanted to be with him.

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"Where's Sarah?" he asked.

"Your house, I think. She and Holly are best friends, remember?"

"Wheelers and Hoppers. Either friends or dating; I don't think they can hate each other."

"We have the house to ourselves today."

*Oh. Oh! WELL THEN.*

Before much else could happen, they were on the couch, desperately kissing each other and letting their hands roam. Their clothes stayed on because despite the fact that her father and younger sister were out, there was a chance one of them could come home at any moment. And Mike *really* didn't want to be caught by El's dad; he was as tall as Mike but more solidly built and he was a cop. Which meant he owned several guns and was trained to *use* said guns.

But all thoughts of impending shotgun shells to the body flew out the window as El rolled his lower lip between her teeth, making him groan and slide his hands up her shirt.

Suddenly, there was a *bang* as the front door opened. They stopped kissing each other and looked up just in time to see a girl with the same honey-brown hair as El standing there at the threshold to the living room. Any anger the girl had on her face evaporated as she took in the scene before her.

"Ellie. Who's this?" she asked.

"Oh. Um... Kat, this is my boyfriend, Mike. Mike, this is my older sister, Kat."

Mike could definitely see the resemblance between the sisters. And Kat appeared to not be in a very good mood as it was, so he swallowed and stood up, sticking out his hand to shake hers.

"It's nice to meet you," he stated.

"Same to you." She accepted the handshake. "It's not everybody who can make a math nun break her sacred vows."

"Kat, I *swear*!" yelled El.

"You made your bed, Ellie-Belle. Now you gotta lie in it."

"Why are you here?"

"Because, dearest Jane Eleanor, tomorrow is Thanksgiving and our father can't cook for shit. I'm amazed you and Sarah are still alive. And I still live here, you know."

"I know."

"Now, go wash up because you're helping me do day-before prep this year."

"Yes, *Mom*."

"Don't take that tone with me." El disappeared into the bathroom and Kat's eyes again turned to Mike. "Now, Michael... sorry I interrupted. That was a complete bitch thing to do."

"N-no, it's fine."

"No it wasn't."

"Okay, um, so could you tell me something? What's with the whole 'math nun' thing you and Jenny keep bringing up?"

"Ellie swore off love when she was thirteen to focus on becoming a

psychologist. Math just happened to be her favorite subject so that's what stuck. And it works as a tease, particularly when you pair it with—"

"KAT, I WILL MURDER YOU AND DAD WILL NEVER FIND THE BODY!" El shrieked.

"*Calculust.*"

"I hate you. I hate you." El buried her face in her hands and Mike wrapped his arms around her comfortingly. She leaned into his embrace with a practiced ease that had come from the past few weeks of dating.

Internally, he was laughing his ass off. Kat and El really *were* like him and Nancy, right down to the ceaseless teasing. Except for the fact that this was sisterly teasing between sisters, not a brother and a sister.

"What about you? How's the mysterious boyfriend?"

"He's fine, thank you." Kat rolled her eyes. "His roommate, on the other hand... *God*, what an ass." El slid from Mike's arms.

"I should get going," Mike sighed. "I'll call you later, okay, El?"

"Okay." She pecked him on the lips and noticed Kat smirking. "Talk to you, then."

Mike went out the door and El whirled to face her sister.

"Why did you say that shit?!"

"Aw, Ellie-Belle! I'm your sister. Since we don't have a mom, it's my job to relentlessly tease and embarrass you in front of your boyfriend."

"When do I get to meet yours?"

"Tomorrow. He's coming for dinner; Dad already knows, before you ask. And that's not important. How did you and Mike happen?"



"Oh... well... he sits in front of me in calculus, and he started tutoring me..."

"Let me guess—you saw him and you can't keep yourself from staring at him in class, so you can't take notes and you were failing because you couldn't stop staring at him."

"Exactly! How did you know that?"

"Because that's what happened with me and Steve. Except with us, it was in World Civ."

"So he *does* have a name..." Kat snorted and went into the kitchen, where El joined her in doing 'day-before' prep, as they called it.

"Of course. I just wasn't sure how serious it was until recently."

"You've been with him since... what, February? How the hell didn't you know how serious it was?"

"Simple—he was a player." She smirked and leaned against the sink. "You know he actually dated Mike's sister?"

"No—what the hell?!"

"Yeah. Steve Harrington, former king of Hawkins High. He graduated before I got there—you know, senior year."

"As long as he treats you right, I don't really care." Kat nodded.

"Same to Mike. If he hurts you, I'm snapping his neck."

"Kat..."

"Yes, Sister Eleanor?"

"It's El."

"Hm?"

"Mike said El fits me better. Short for Eleanor."

"Aw! You really *did* break your vows of chastity for him!"

"KAT!"

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Over the next couple months, El was introduced to Mike's mom and his older sister, who immediately connected her to Kat and commented that she'd heard her ex was with the eldest Hopper daughter now. Mike had stared at El for a second then turned bright red. El had started laughing once she realized that Mike felt the same way about the situation that she did and that was comforting in a way. His younger sister, of course, already knew El because Sarah was Holly's best friend and El had really started to drop Sarah off at the Wheelers once she started being tutored by Mike. And even more so when they'd started dating.

In fact, right now, they were sitting in a blanket fort in Mike's basement, the end credits of *A New Hope* rolling on the screen as El moved her mouth against Mike's.

She loved everything about him, even more than she had that first day of class. Her daydreams of tracing constellations in his freckles had quickly become reality after that first date at the Hawk. She and Mike were terrible with keeping their hands off each other—and not just when they were making out. It was when they were cuddling or watching movies or even grabbing a bite to eat. A constant need to at least be holding hands, which was easiest in calculus when it came to school. He'd sit in front of her and hold her hand while taking notes for the both of them, his long arms making the task easier. They still didn't sit together at lunch or reveal their relationship to anybody outside the Party, mostly because revealing their relationship would most likely result in Troy going after Mike out of jealousy.

"God, you're perfect," Mike whispered, making her smile as she nuzzled his neck. "I love you."

He froze for half a second, not believing he'd just said that out loud.

*Fuck. Fucking shit.*

"I love you, too."

"Oh, thank God." She giggled and shoved him over before lying down

beside him.

"Did you think I didn't?"

"I just didn't mean for it to slip out like that. I thought the first time I told you would be more romantic than making out in my basement after watching a movie."

"Mm... I think it was plenty romantic." She smiled at him some more.  
"I just need you. Not grand gestures."

"You deserve grand gestures."

"You think so?"

Instead of verbally answering, he kissed her and before too long, they were making out again. Mike's hand somehow found its way up her skirt and onto her ass, making her groan as he unconsciously squeezed it. Then he froze; he hadn't meant to do that. He wasn't ready to take that step with El quite yet.

"What's wrong?"

"I... sorry. I just... can we not... how do I say this without offending you or sounding like a jackass?"

"Try." He nodded.

"I'm not ready to go too far yet."

"Good. Neither am I."

Relief flooded his body and he relaxed, resting back against the pillows that made up the bottom of the fort. She started giggling and curled up against him.

"You're really warm," she told him.

"I'm a human furnace—that's what Holly says, anyway."

"Well, I'm always cold, so that works out perfectly."

"You don't feel cold to me." He kissed her again and she smiled

against his lips.

And a couple months later, they were where our story began: cuddling in that blanket fort. But this time, it was after having sex for the first time and they were both pleasantly exhausted. Mike was already falling asleep and El wasn't far behind as she pulled the blanket over the two of them.

*Guess I'm not so stupid with love.*

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**WHOO OKAY THAT TOOK A WHILE.**

**But seriously, this is the longest single chapter I've ever written. Over 7100 words. I think before this my record was somewhere around 6000. But whatever. It doesn't matter.**

**Title was inspired by the song of the same name: "Stupid With Love" from the Mean Girls Broadway musical. I might do another one-shot using either "Apex Predator" or "Revenge Party", depending on what you guys think. It's a good soundtrack that you should give a listen to.**

**Also, this could also be titled 'Every Mileven High School AU in a One-Shot' and it would work just as well.**

**Originally, this was going to be a multi-chapter story, then I decided that nah, I already have enough going and the ideas in my head aren't enough to sustain a story with multiple chapters like this. So you got a one-shot.**

**So long and thanks for all the fish!**